

David Dunlop Tobacco Factory  
45-127 Old Street  
Petersburg  
Virginia

HABS NO. VA-663

HABS  
VA  
27-PET,  
35-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

## DAVID DUNLOP TOBACCO FACTORY

HABS  
VA  
27-PET  
35-

Location: 45-127 Old Street, Petersburg, Virginia

Present Owner Maclin-Zimmer-McGill Tobacco Company, Inc.,  
35-127 Old Street, Petersburg, Virginia

Present Occupant: Maclin-Zimmer-McGill Tobacco Company, Inc.

Present Use: Tobacco Factory

Statement of Significance: This tobacco factory, which is today part of a larger complex, was erected c. 1887-1888 by David Dunlop. It is the oldest tobacco building still being used for tobacco manufacturing in Petersburg. Architecturally interesting is its interior wood structural system and exterior corbeled brick cornice line.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: c. 1887-1888 (Landbook 1887 and 1888, Handwritten bound manuscripts in the Clerk's Office of Hustings Court, Petersburg.)
2. Architect: According to a dedicatory plaque mounted on the second floor of the south wall of the exterior, the building was built in 1887 by William J. Chappell. The contract was for \$45,000. [The Cockade City (Petersburg: Geo. W. Englehart, 1894), p. 53.]
3. Original and subsequent owners: A chain of title for the building follows. Deed Books are in the Clerk's Office of Hustings Court at Petersburg.

1887 Deed February 24, 1887 recorded in  
Book 48 page 385  
W. M. Crowder  
Margaret A. Crowder  
to  
David Dunlop

1887 Deed February 24, 1887 recorded in  
Book 48 page 386  
Petersburg Savings and Insurance Company  
to  
David Dunlop

1945 Deed March 31, 1945 recorded in  
Book 152 page 89  
William Earle White

(special commissioner)  
to  
Maclin-Zimmer-McGill Tobacco Company, Inc.

This particular building of the total complex is located on Old Street, and is bounded by Old Street on the south, Market Street on the west, Oyster Shell Alley on the east, and other buildings of the complex on the north.

4. Alterations and additions: Unknown.
5. Important old views: Published sketch of building. [The Cockade City (Petersburg: Geo. M. Englehardt, 1894), p. 61.] This sketch has been reproduced in the HABS collection.
6. Likely sources not yet investigated: The papers of the David Dunlop Factory have been given to the library at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina by the heirs of David Dunlop.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The following account of the builder is taken from The Cockade City (Petersburg: Geo. M. Englehardt, 1894), pp. 62-63.

"David Dunlop, MANUFACTURER OF PLUG AND TWIST, ON OLD STREET, is proprietor of the oldest tobacco business here, and the largest exporting works, not here alone, but in the whole country.

"It was established in 1791, and is, therefore, a centenarian these three years back. Its founder was James Dunlop, a native of Ayshire Scotland. He was succeeded by his nephew, DAVID DUNLOP, who dying in 1864, was succeeded by the present proprietor, by whom the business has been vastly enlarged, until it has trade in all the four quarters of the globe, and an especially large one in the East Indies, Australia and England for distribution throughout the world. He is a man of wealth and influence here, but his largest interests are in the line of tobacco.

"This factory fronts 300 feet on Old Street and runs back to the N. & W. R. R. track, a distance of 150 feet. It is five stories high, of brick, and all new, except its box factory, which is an old stone building--one of the oldest, in fact, of Petersburg, but still in good repair, however.

"In the main or western part of the factory the MANUFACTURING is carried on; (this is the building we are interested in for this survey) the other, or eastern half, is used for REHANDLING AND PREPARING THE LEAF. The equipment in manufacturing department proper is thoroughly modern. The power is steam, and by an ingenious arrangement, in use in this factory only, the exhaust is utilized for heating the building and in the drying rooms, etc.

"This factory employs six hundred to seven hundred hands. Last year (1892) its actual product was 2,716,687 pounds. All this was exported. Its specialty is the "DERBY," a brand which has precedence of all others in Australia as everywhere since 1887. It took the gold medal of the MELBOURNE EXPOSITION of 1888-1889, and of its two-thirds of the output of the factory here is composed.

"Mr. Dunlop was formerly in the tobacco business in another connection on Washington Street, but, after a fire there, he abandoned that location. He still has a large storage warehouse for leaf and rehandlery on that ground, however, which is 40 by 200, and four stories.

"For his box making alone he utilizes 1,000,000 feet of lumber a year. He has made special provisions for shipping by rail from the factory. The Norfolk & Western track runs right by rail from the factory. He utilizes the finest Virginia tobacco only."

Prepared by Randall J. Biallas  
University of Illinois, Urbana  
August 1968

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This multi-story brick factory building is one of the few remaining examples of early Petersburg industry.
2. Condition of fabric: The interior and exterior are both in fair condition.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The entire factory complex is made up of several parts linked together. However, the portion under consideration is the earliest part, built c. 1887-88, forming 2 sides of a four sided rectangular complex with a courtyard in the middle. The part fronting W. Old Street is 4-1/2 stories plus a basement, and similar in character. The original portion, forming part of the west enclosure, is 1 1/2 story and houses the factory offices. The 4-1/2 story portion is 144' x 49' (the long side fronting W. Old St.) and is part of the production area. There are other smaller parts "tacked" onto the rear, which house the machine room, restrooms, etc. The 1 story wings on the west is 45' x 20' (the long side fronting alley.) Additions have been added to complete the enclosure. The overall dimensions of the block

are approximately 144' x 151'.

2. Foundations: Brick.
3. Wall construction: The walls are red brick, natural finish, and badly weathered. The south wall of the 4- $\frac{1}{2}$  story portion has several distinguishing characteristics: 1) 4 brick belt courses between the basement and first floor, and between the first and second floors, 2) 8 vertical brick strips which project out approximately 4" from wall and are spaced evenly apart, 3) at the roof (center of building) is a corbeled brick pediment which projects above the roof line and has a circular louvered opening in it.
4. Chimneys: There is one large tapered rectangular brick stack on the portion being surveyed (north side of 4- $\frac{1}{2}$  story portion).
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: There is one double door on the south with a light above and a brick arch framing the transom. There is a double door on the west with the same characteristics. Both appear to be original. Other doors are of no consequence.
  - b. Windows and shutters: The south wall of the 4- $\frac{1}{2}$  story portion is 17 window bays wide. All windows are similar--double-hung, six lights each sash with a slightly sloping brick arch above the window. First floor windows have bars over them and there are some partially exposed basement windows. East windows have large metal shutters, on both the original part and addition.
6. Porches and areaways: There is one small stoop at the entrance to the office wing on the west. There are no other porches, no areaways.
7. Structural system: The exterior walls are bearing and in the 4- $\frac{1}{2}$  story portion the floor joists (2" x 10") run north-south, supported at the center span by a large wood beam (12" x 14"), which in turn is supported by interior wood columns 12' o.c. The original structure has in some cases been reinforced with modern steel members. The roof structure is made up of large trusses, each member of which is approximately 10" x 14". The trusses are about 8' o.c.
8. Roof shape and covering: The main part (4- $\frac{1}{2}$  stories) has a gabled roof with brick parapets at the ends. The covering is slate. The gabled roof rises 12 to 13 feet from its base.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The floor plans are simple. The one story wing has been extensively remodeled, and broken up into modern offices. The 4-1/2 story portion is primarily a large open area on each floor, with little or no interior partitions. The basement is storage. First through fourth stories are production areas, and the attic is storage. The 4-1/2 story addition is similar, the floor in one part simply being an extension of the floor in the other part.
2. Stairways: There is one central stairway, which serves both the original section and the addition. It is located along the west wall of the addition. A narrow, enclosed, separate stairway to the attic is located along the east wall of the original building on the fourth floor. There are two elevators in the building.
3. Flooring: There is wood plank flooring on all floors except basement (original) which has a concrete floor.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Painted brick, finish poor condition. The 1 story part is wood, paneled & plastered, modern.
5. Doorways and doors: None of consequence.
6. Decorative features and trim: None.
7. Lighting: Modern.
8. Heating: Steam, pipes located along walls.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The building is oriented south on W. Old Street at the corner of the alley. To the north are freight rail lines serving the factory and just beyond that is the river. The total factory complex takes up 3 square blocks in a light industrial and commercial area. There are also some residences located in the area.
2. Landscaping and walks: The building is set back approximately 12' from the street on the south with a sidewalk between. No planting.

Prepared by John M. McRae  
Project Supervisor  
Historic American  
Buildings Survey  
August 1968

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records are part of the documentation made during the 1968 Peters-

burg Summer Project, undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with The Historic Petersburg Foundation, Inc., with financial assistance from The Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission. During the summer, records were made of twenty-two buildings in the city.

The project was under the general direction of James C. Massey, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey. Project Supervisor was John M. McRae of the University of Florida. The recording team was composed of Randall J. Biallas, historian (University of Illinois, Urbana), and student assistant architects Michael Hamilton (University of Arizona), Thomas J. Sanford (Washington State University), and Edwin S. Smith, Jr. (Rhode Island School of Design). Photographs were made by George Eisenman.